

Congressman Mike Pence [participated](#) in a live online chat with *Palladium-Item* readers during the most recent segment of "

[P-I Live!](#)

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[Pence: Health care reform can't burden our kids](#)

Congressman takes questions on Afghanistan war strategy

PALLADIUM-ITEM

Rep. Mike Pence, whose 6th Congressional District includes Wayne and surrounding east central Indiana counties, was the featured guest for a special episode of "P-I Live!" on Monday, discussing the status of health care reform, the war in Afghanistan and other questions submitted by the newspaper and its readers.

"P-I Live!" is a weekly online discussion of issues and people in the recent news, moderated by Palladium-Item community conversation editor Dale McConnaughay with questions submitted by forum readers.

The following is an excerpt from Monday's chat. To view the complete episode, log on to www.pal-item.com/pilive

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- **Question:** What is the latest on the health reform front? Is the talk of compromise mostly empty?

Rep. Mike Pence: Since the majority of negotiations have taken place behind closed doors, I cannot really tell you where things stand in the House of Representatives but the Senate unveiled the latest version of their plan this (Monday) afternoon and it looks a lot like the big government solution, higher taxes, mandates and a public option of earlier versions. If your readers are interested, they can see a brand new video entitled "Behind Closed Doors" at www.gop.gov

that gives the contrast between how the president said negotiations would take place in the open and the way things are being done behind closed doors.

- **Question:** You have been an outspoken critic of a so-called "public option." You do not see any compromise that could include a government-run plan?

Pence: The American people want health care reform that will lower the cost of health insurance and lower the cost of health care. But the American people do not want a government run insurance plan that will come with mandates, higher taxes and will cause millions to lose the health insurance they currently have. I cannot support health care reform that compromises the relationship between the doctor and patient or one that burdens future generations with bureaucracy and debt.

- **Question:** On another topic, you are among the president's critics on Afghan policy, or a lack thereof. Would you recommend a particular course of action to the administration?

Pence: I don't consider myself a critic of the president's policy on Afghanistan. I strongly supported the president's request for troops in March of this year and told the president, at that time, that I would stand with him as he sought to provide our soldiers with the resources they need to defeat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. My recent statements were meant to urge the president to act decisively and provide General McChrystal the resources he has requested.

- **Question:** Former Vice President Dick Cheney has drawn some fire for accusing the president of "dithering" on Afghanistan. Do you share that view, or do you share the criticism of that view by, among others, John McCain and George Will among fellow Republicans and conservatives?

Pence: I believe that the president should act decisively to resource the strategy that he announced in March of this year.

- **Question:** What do you think of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (the former School of the Americas)? Also what do you think of the protest movement to close it down?

Pence: It is undeniable that the institute has trained individuals who went on to commit human rights abuses in the region but I believe that the program has been reformed and has played an

important role in building relationships with military leaders in our hemisphere and, as such, it should not be eliminated.

- **Question:** Do you have any concerns the New York 23 race portends, as some suggest, a breakup of the GOP into irreconcilable camps?

Pence: As to the congressional race in New York 23, I have not endorsed the Republican candidate in that race and would prefer to make no further comment about it.

Additional Facts HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- "P-I Live!" is a weekly live chat show on pal-item.com that allows you to ask key local newsmakers questions about what's going on in our communities.

- Go to www.pal-item.com/pilive to read or watch previous "P-I Live" chats.